

Chaplains go too: Religious warriors deploy for ‘global ministry’ mission

By Chaplain (Maj.) Richard Munsell
8th Fighter Wing chaplain

Everything in life must change. Change is an essential aspect of living. This is very true for the Air Force chaplaincy. When I first joined the Air Force I was told, “It is just like being a civilian pastor, the only difference is you wear a uniform.”

My first few assignments were during the Cold War years when America’s major threat was the Warsaw Pact. The U.S. Air Force operated primarily out of large “mega-bases.” Deployment was something practiced during exercises, rather than something we actually did. Most chapel programs were designed around ministry to the families at these large installations. For the most part, my work was basically the same kind of ministry I had been doing as a civilian for six years prior to my Air Force service.

In 1991, I saw a new vision of what the Air Force was really about. I was on leave in northern Italy when my supervisor called me and told me to “get back to the base as quickly as possible by any means possible.” Within three days, I was on my way to Operation Desert Shield. I remember landing at Doha, Qatar, in late September and saying, “this sure doesn’t feel like just

being a civilian pastor in uniform.” As soon as I arrived, I had to attend chemical warfare training. I’m used to being the one that does the talking at large gatherings, however, when the experts were talking about proper Mission-Oriented Protective Posture, how to use atropine auto-injectors and the meaning of all the alarm conditions – I was not talking, I was listening. I was deployed for seven months and the deployment challenged me to rethink what the Air Force, and especially the chaplaincy, was about.

We are not like civilians. Most civilians don’t spend a year away from their family and friends, or demonstrate their “ability to survive and operate” in a combat environment. Most civilians don’t have an enemy trained and determined to do battle with them at any moment. Most civilians don’t consciously live with the reality that combat is possible.

Warriors cannot survive and carry out the mission if they are like the civilian populous. If the Air Force chaplaincy is to be effective, we must focus on how our ministry is different from our civilian counterparts. If I told you Air Force pilots, aircraft controllers or civil engineers were the same regardless of whether they were civilians or military, you would balk.

Commander’s Hotline

The commander’s hotline is your direct line of communication between me and the Wolf Pack. It’s one of several means of helping to resolve concerns and to get my response to comments and questions. As a general rule, I ask you to contact the agency involved first, but if you are not satisfied, call the hotline at 782-5284, e-mail the 8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs office or e-mail me directly.



Col. Philip Breedlove,
8th Fighter Wing commander

Who to call	
Base exchange.....	782-4520
Chapel.....	782-4300
Civil engineer squadron customer service.....	782-5318
Commissary manager.....	782-4144
Computer help desk.....	782-2666
Fitness center.....	782-4026
Housing office.....	782-4088
Inspector General.....	782-4850
IDEA office.....	782-4020
Law enforcement desk.....	782-4944
Legal assistance.....	782-4283
Military equal opportunity.....	782-4055
Military pay.....	782-5574
Military personnel flight customer service.....	782-5276
Medical patient advocate.....	782-4014

Everyone in uniform at Kunsan Air Base is a warrior, and the saying “one team, one fight” is true. I am not a combatant, but I am far from being a civilian wearing a uniform. I certainly didn’t feel like a civilian during Desert Storm, crouched in a bunker awaiting inbound SCUD missiles. I distinctly remember standing on the flightline during Desert Storm watching aircraft taking off with bombs under wing to drop on Iraq. I realized this is not something they are doing, this is something I am doing as well.

So, when chaplains visit your workplace, know that we see ourselves as an integral part of the fight. Did you know

chaplain service personnel have one of the highest deployment rates in the Air Force? The Air Force calls this concept “Global Ministry.” Our focus is to bring “a visible reminder of the “holy” to all personnel at worship services, through study programs, in counseling or at the workplace. Our mission statement is: “The Chaplain Service delivers worship opportunities, pastoral care and advice to Air Force leaders regarding spiritual, religious, ethical and moral issues.”

I do not consider us just like being a civilian pastor only wearing a uniform. I consider us one with the people we serve.

USFK Sensing Sessions

Editor’s Note: This series of monthly articles addresses issues and concerns of military forces serving within the U.S. Forces Korea. USFK Commander Gen. Thomas Schwartz seeks to make serving in Korea an assignment of choice and uses sensing sessions as a means of focusing the USFK and service component commanders and staffs.

Issue: Regarding “Space-A” flights, can we change the rules so Non-Command Sponsored (NCS) family members can travel to and from Korea on them? Right now, only command-sponsored family members can travel on AMC U.S. Air Force Space-A flights.

Response: On Oct. 4 I signed out a request to the CINC, U.S. Transportation Command, asking him to have South Korea designated as an authorized travel location for NCS family members. I have already asked our J1 to work with both U.S. Pacific Command and USTRANSCOM action officers and work out all details. I believe we can overcome all issues and concerns, such as force protection, potential financial burden to families and to our servicemembers, Noncombatant Evacuation Orders, and our over-burdened infrastructure (medical, billeting, etc.), through sound management and policy.

Ricochet sends season’s greetings to the Wolf Pack

Editors Note: The following e-mail from Ricochet band member Shannon Farmer was received by the 8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs office.

Hey Wolf Pack. We just finished our year with a 10-day party in Las Vegas. Thank Goodness I have a few weeks off before our 2001 tour begins.

Believe it or not, Ricochet is still talking about Kunsan. We had at least one “coin check” a night in our dressing room. It seemed of the 25 or more coins we collected on our tour there, all six band members always “checked” with a Wolf Pack coin. One night a young airman on leave from Kunsan came through the autograph line. So, the next show we all ordered a drink and had the entire audience toast to “The Wolf Pack, here’s to the sacrifices you make to provide our freedoms!” It’s kind of funny, we watched every Air Force movie-documentary we could find on our satellite in the bus (we had a 30 hour ride home from Las Vegas). It is easier to understand after meeting all of you guys.

On a different note, the reason for my writing was to wish you and the rest of the Wolf Pack a happy holiday season. You and your family will be in or prayers.

If there is any thing we can do from here, don’t hesitate to ask. Once again Wolf Pack, God bless. Look forward to hearing how things are going for the Wolf Pack. Shannon



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The preferred medium for submission is e-mail to WolfPackWarrior@kunsan.af.mil.

Faxes and typewritten submissions are also accepted.

The voice mail to 8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs is 782-4705.

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